with the Arab population of the northern Sudan. [75 101] Their country was first subjected to intermittent taxation and raiding by the Turks about 1820 and was finally conquered by them in 1867 and became part of the Ottoman Empire. When the Turkish Administration succumbed to the Sudanese Mahdi the Shilluk were involved in a struggle against this new ruler and afterwards against his Khalifa. Lord Kitchener arrived in Shillukland at the end of 1898 and since that time the people have been under Anglo-Egyptian administration. I mention these political events because they have strongly influenced the Shilluk kingship for close on a century, during which the kings have been executed, exiled, deposed, and nominated, by foreign governments. The funerary rites of a dead king and the procedures of election and investiture of a new king were probably not performed in the full traditional manner during this period.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The hamlets of the Shilluk, who number about 110,000 souls, are almost continuous, like beads on a string, along the west bank of the Nile from near Lake No to about lat. 12 N. with a number of 361 161 131

settlements on the east bank and along the lower reaches of the Sobat. Their country is treeless savannah but, unlike their cousins the Nuer and Dinka, they are predominantly agricultural and sedentary, for their long river frontage gives them adequate water and grazing in the dry season for the comparatively few cattle (about 25,000) they possess.[1] The brief account I give of their social structure is mostly derived from articles in *Sudan Notes and Records* by Mr Pumphrey and Mr Howell.[2]

The hamlets (*myer*, sing. *pac*), built from 100 yards to a mile or so apart on high ground parallel to the river, vary in size from one to fifty homesteads; a homestead (*gol*), the residence of a family (*gol*), consisting usually of two huts encircled by a fence. Each hamlet is occupied by members of an extended family, or small lineage, with their wives, and the homesteads of this group are arranged in a rough horseshoe shape around a common cattle-byre, which shelters the animals in the rains and is used as a club at all seasons, and a common kraal. The headman of a hamlet (*jal dwong pac*) who is also the head of a lineage in

[1] I am indebted to Mr John Donald of the Sudan Political Service for the most recent figures of human and bovine population.

[2] M. E. C. Pumphrey, 'The Shilluk Tribe', *S.N. and R.* (1941); P. P. Howell, 'The Shilluk Settlement', *ibid.* (1941).

the settlement of which it forms part represents the hamlet on the council of the settlement and receives in consequence a robe of honour from the king or from the chief of the settlement. If his hamlet is only a subsidiary seat of a lineage in the settlement he is regarded merely as its senior member.

The settlement to which I have just referred is called *podh*, a word which has a number of meanings but generally designates a group of hamlets, occupied by different lineages, which, though there may be much competition between them, unite for defence, for the ritual of age-sets (an institution otherwise of little political importance), and in intersettlement and national affairs, and have a common chief. There are about a hundred of these settlements in Shillukland, each having a population of from less than 100 to more than 600 adult males. They are structurally distinct groups of a political kind though the distance that divides a settlement from adjacent settlements may be no greater than that which separates a hamlet from its nearest neighbours in the same settlement.

In every settlement there is a dominant lineage, the *dyil*, the owners of the soil, with whom the various stranger and immigrant accretions (*wedh*) identify themselves politically and with whom they

Northern Shillukland and southern Shillukland are the arches of the politico-religious kingdom of the Shilluk of which the kingship is the keystone. That segmentation has taken this particular form is doubtless due to the peculiar ribbon-distribution of the Shilluk settlements.

The whole Shilluk people recognize a single head and we can therefore speak of the Shilluk nation and of their king, and it is with his place in the national polity that this lecture is particularly concerned. According to Shilluk tradition the present king is the thirty-first of his line. All the kings are believed to be descended from Nyikang, the leader of the Shilluk in their heroic age, who led them into their present homeland, conquering it from its inhabitants and dividing it among the lineages of his followers; and Nyikang, or, as we would say, the spirit of Nyikang, is believed to be in every king and to have passed from king to king down the line of his successors. Nyikang is thus a mythological personification of the timeless kingship which itself symbolizes the national structure, a changeless moral order.

The rule of succession is that only a son of a king can be invested with the kingship. As many sons of kings have never succeeded to the throne, there

PLATE IV

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Contrasting types of Shilluk

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Shilluk villages from Nile

[See p. 40

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

631 on page 45. Gar, the northern division, has Golbañ as its capital. Each division has five provinces; those of Lwak from south to north are Tung or Tonga, Odong or Panyikang (Fenikang, with [778] capital Fenikang, containing the great shrine of Nyakang, perhaps the holiest of all Shilluk shrines), Adod or Dithin, and Padit, while Gar is divided into Dithwok, Dimoth, Non, Dhyang Dwong, and Jangoriang; the two latter are more or less equivalent to the geographical area called Mwom, embracing the most northerly portion of the Shilluk kingdom with its capital Akurwa, the site of one of the most important shrines of Nyakang.

The chiefs of Mwom and Tonga were said to wield most power; the chief of Kwom is naturally somewhat eclipsed by the presence of the king in this district.

●361 It is difficult to describe a Shilluk village; in fact, the word is hardly applicable to the Shilluk settlement. In typical Shilluk country on the west bank a series of small hamlets may be seen lying from a quarter to a mile or more back from the river, succeeding each other, as has been well said, like beads on a string. Most of these hamlets are small, consisting of only a few homesteads. Each homestead 592 belongs to one householder and contains some three or four huts 342 surrounded by a fence of millet stalks. One hut is the sleeping apartment of the householder and his wife—if there is more than one wife each woman will have her own hut—one is used for cooking, and others may be assigned to servants, or slaves if any are attached to the family. The householders in each hamlet are members of a single 614 clan, with descent in the male line, and are often closely related by 621 blood.

Thus the hamlet is both a social and a local group, and though the usual word for clan is *kwa* (which is also used for "family" or "ancestor", and for "grandfather") our informants at Fenikang often used the territorial prefix *pa* (or *fa*), which literally means "place", for the group that occupied one hamlet. It is clear that members of the same *kwa* are clansmen, whether they dwell in one hamlet or are located at a distance. Another word that seemed to have the same significance was *gol*. Actually, as Mr. Heasty 613 informs us, this is a smaller unit formed within the *kwa*, arising 614 through some influential man starting a settlement of his own, when his descendants (living there) form his *gol* until they become a large 621 and powerful unit, take a new name, and become a *kwa*. Thus the *gol* Nyikako near Doleib Hill takes its name from an influential

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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Fashoda

Fashoda, cattle byres and cattle

Above p. 48

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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ichneumon (mangouste). The natives also hunt the hare, porcupine, ground-squirrel, rat, and hedgehog. The rivers and khors, and chiefly their sidearms, are populated by crocodiles, hippos, and numerous fish, some of which weigh up to lbs. 200. The birds are mainly riverain: cranes, storks, herons, egrets, fish-eagles, marabous, pelicans, ibises, ducks, geese; the guinea-fowl is very common; numberless swarms of dura-birds (Pyromelana franciscana) are a great nuisance to the farmer; besides them quails, pigeons, turtle-doves, hawks, crows, swallows, owls, and starlings are frequent. Of snakes the largest ist python; of poisonous species the puff-adder and some others occur; harmless snakes are numerous.

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POPULATION The population amounts to about 60000 souls,[1] who live in a little more than 1200 villages, and 10000 "domiciles", each of which consists of three to five huts. Accordingly the average number of people living in a village is 50, and one domicile is inhabited by about six persons. The largest village is Atwadoi in a district of the same name north of Kodok; it consists (1903) of 120 domiciles. The villages generally lie in the belt between the swamp of the Nile-bank and the forest. There are, however, eight groups of villages 12—22 miles inland, away from the river. The country is, for its size, and considering the fact that only in the higher parts settlements are possible, thickly populated. "Right away from Kaka to Lake No is a continous string of villages lying about a mile from the river. There are only two points in the whole of this distance, at which the interval between villages exceeds two miles, and these are the points where grazing is bad, between Akurwar and Nun, and between Nielwag and Nyagwado." A. E. S., p. 193.

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According to Schweinfurth, the population was much larger formerly. In 1871, when the Egyptians had conquered the country, a census was taken; the villages on the left bank of the Nile were almost exactly 3000. The inhabitants of this part numbered one million, each village consisting of 45—200 huts, a hut comprising four persons. No part of Africa, not even of the world, is so densely populated. "The whole western Nile bank, as far as the boundaries of the country reach, is like one single village, whose parts are separated by a distance of only 500 to 1000 steps. The hut-clusters are built in an astonishing regularity, and are so crowded together that from a distance they look like a cluster of mushrooms."

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The statement of a population of more than one million is probably too high; the Shilluks have doubtlessly suffered cruelly from wars and raids, but in spite of this a decrease from one million to 60000 within a time of forty years is hardly thinkable.

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Since the time the people live under the peace of Anglo-Egyptian rule, they

[1] This is the number of the White Nile and Sobat Shilluks only; if all the Shilluk speaking people are included, the population will amount to several hundreds of thousands.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

to do except hunting, fishing, building or repairing the houses, or practising some craft: their chief occupation in this time is idling about, seeing friends, dancing, etc. But in the rainy season all people, including women and children, are engaged in farm-work; during these months they are really hard-working.

To give an opinion on the mental abilities of the natives would require a long and intimate acquaintance with them. From my personal experiences I can only say that I feel an admiration for the few men who have been working with me during my studies. They were never tired in giving explanations, in procuring folklore and helping me to acquire a thorough knowledge of the language. Whenever their store of tales was exhausted, they used to go to their families in the evening to get new informations; historical reports being provided by old men, chiefly from those belonging to the royal family, while for stories, riddles, etc. women were the best source. Though we were at work day after day, which meant for them a considerable and quite unaccustomed mental exertion, they never showed any unwillingness, but were really interested in the work. I consider them an intelligent, quick-witted people. This is confirmed by their folklore. They have a decided sense and predilection for historical traditions, being the only black people of the Eastern Sudan who are able to trace back their own history for centuries. The fact that they have had, up to the European occupation of the country, a kingdom with a well-ordered provincial government, shows no doubt certain political capabilities.

II. OCCUPATIONS.

HOUSEBUILDING

Vide page 96 and 97.

The homestead is surrounded by a fence of dura-stalks. The villages are built in a circle, the open space in the centre containing sometimes a meeting-house for the men, and a small, narrow hut which is dedicated to Nyikang or some other ancient king.

AGRICULTURE

Vide page 99.

CATTLE-BREEDING

The favourite occupation of the Shilluks is cattle-breeding; cattle mean wealth and a social position, while the cultivation of the ground is merely the means of procuring daily food. Besides cattle goats and sheep are kept. The number of cattle has in earlier times undoubtedly been much larger than it is to-day, the desire of robbing cattle being one of the chief reasons for the raids of Arabs, Turks, and other enemies. The cattle census of 1903 showed 12173 head of cattle and 63473 sheep and goats, which is very little compared with that of the Dinkas. But the number of cattle is increasing now.

The cattle are of the zebu race, with a hump behind the neck; they are tall,

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

INHERITANCE

The sons inherit the property of their father. The wives of the deceased father are divided among the children, who may, and in most cases do, marry them, except their own mother. It is said that sometimes, when a husband is very old and infirm, his wives put him to death, in order to get a younger companion. On inheritance vide page 113.

DANCING AND WAR-PLAYS

Their chief amusement is dancing. The houses of a village are built in a circle, leaving an open place in their midst. Here the inhabitants assemble in the evening, stretching themselves in the warm ashes or on a skin, or squatting on a piece of ambach; several small fires of cow dung are burning and spread a smoke of strong smell, which is the best protection from mosquito-stings. The events of the day are discussed here, the tobacco pipe and merisa pot going from hand to hand. In the middle of this open place the trunk of a large tree is erected, in which the drums are suspended. With them signals are given in times of danger, but more frequently they are used to accompany the dances of the young people. These public dances are among the greatest events in the lives of the young Shilluks; even old men and women, though not taking an active part, are highly interested in them; sitting before the huts in front of the dancers they constitute a chorus, who accompanies the transactions of the younger generation with loud acclamations or blamings. The dances generally take place during the dry season; they begin at about four o'clock in the afternoon, or, in case there is moonshine, later in the evening, and last from three to five hours or longer. As a rule one village invites its neighbours by a drum signal given in the early morning of the day fixed for a dance. On hearing this signal the young people show a great zeal in preparing their body, hairdress and the ornaments worn on the occasion. They go to the village in groups or single, men and girls separately. Usually the youths perform some war-dance in full arms at first, in which the girls do not partake; they form a large circle in four or two rows, and while the drum is being beaten, begin dancing and singing war songs. The dance consists in jumping on the toe and at the same time moving slowly forward. These rhythmical movements are from time to time interrupted by a group of dancers violently rushing out of the circle, howling and shouting aloud, brandishing their spears with fierce looks, and performing mock fights or playing pantomimes, in which they exhibit very remarkable ability. Scenes from the hunting, pastoral and agricultural life are represented with such a dramatic vivacity that they richly deserve the applause they earn.

On a given signal, spears, clubs and shields are laid aside and put together in one place, and now the second part, in which the girls partake, begins. The latter have till then been waiting in a separate place, where the female lookers-on are gathered. Each girl selects her own dancer. First the men form again a

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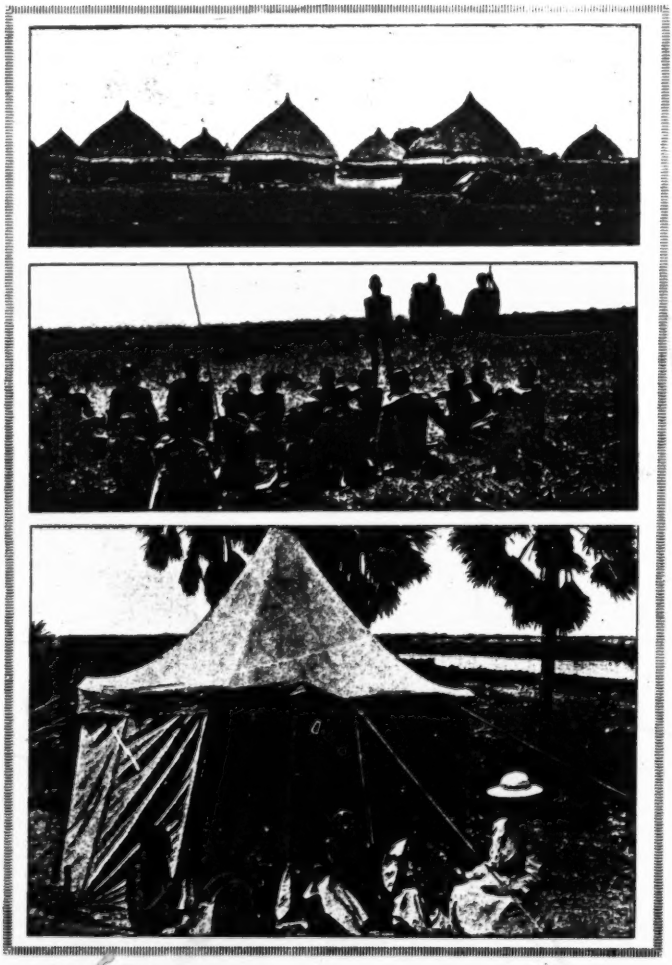

1. Group of Native Huts 2. Group of Boys
3. Girls Sewing School at Doleib Hill

[FACING p. XLVIII (B)]

Part II

THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION, POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES OF THE NILOTES

INTRODUCTION

The structure and organisation of the Nilotic tribal groups, though showing similarities in many respects and suggesting a certain degree of progressive variation from one or two structural types, cannot be considered in one descriptive whole owing to the complexity of the subjects. It is therefore proposed to consider the main Nilotic groups in turn and in conclusion to point out some of the features common to all.

Except where specifically mentioned, the information relating to a people applies to their indigenous organisation.

THE SHILLUK

GENERAL

The Shilluk live in a number of hamlets and settlements which, almost without a break, line the west bank of the White Nile from about 11°N. Lat. to Lake No in the south. There are also a few settlements on the east bank and along the lower reaches of the Sobat river.

They are predominantly agricultural and sedentary, owning comparatively few cattle. The long river frontage of their habitat gives them adequate water and grazing in the dry season for the few cattle they do possess. There are no large scale transhumant movements in the dry season to find cattle pastures. Only youths go into dry season cattle camps which are situated mainly on islands in the river or in dry water-courses near it. The cultivations are likewise nearby, either in the settlement area or inland a short distance away. Ecological conditions therefore enable the people to remain in the same place all the year round and render the settlement areas self-contained economically.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS AND KINSHIP UNITS

The Homestead (gol)

The *gol* is the smallest social unit in the tribe and usually consists of about two huts encircled by a fence. Every married man has a *gol* which he occupies with his wife, or wives, and children. In addition

592 there may be a dependent relative or friend. A man's sons live in his homestead until they get married; if their father is dead, they live in the *gol* of their eldest brother or in that of their father's married [67] brother. The owner of the homestead is the head of the *gol*; he holds the cattle belonging to the unit and is responsible for the behaviour of the members of his *gol*. He has to pay cattle in compensation for any wrong which may be committed by any of the members.

The Hamlet (pac)

● 36 Hamlets are built about 100 yards apart on high ground parallel to the river. They vary considerably in size according to the number of homesteads which compose them. The homesteads of a hamlet are grouped round a cattle kraal containing a hut which shelters all the herds in the rainy season. The byre and hut are used as the general meeting-places and social centres for the inhabitants at all times and guests are entertained [882] there. There is often a *geu*, a hut with no surrounding fence, which is used as a dormitory by the unmarried men. The hamlet is a homogeneous 62 [613] unit being an extended family group or a small lineage.

The Settlement (pouh)

[36] The settlement consists of a number of hamlets, occupied by different lineages. There are several hundred settlements, often not spacially distinct from one another. There is, however, a structural division which is recognised by the people themselves in referring to the settlement units. In spite of lineage differentiations within each settlement, all unite to defend the whole, all take part in the ritual of the age-set organisation, all participate in the settlement's relations with other settlements and all acknowledge a common chief.

554 The lineage organisation within a settlement revolves round two recog-613 nised types of lineages: the *dyil* and the *wedh*. It is said that Nyikang, 621 the Shilluk culture hero and founder of the present Shilluk tribe, originally granted each settlement to a clan. The surviving descendants of the [173] grantees are considered the 'owners of the soil' and are termed *dyil* to distinguish them from lineages which settled on their land later and which are called *wedh*. If the original owners of the land are extinct, the *wedh* lineage next in importance takes their place and becomes *dyil*. The members of the *dyil* lineage are closely associated with the land they occupy and are accorded considerable prestige and authority in virtue of their position and this association. The *dyil* form the core of the settlement and political activities revolve round them. The *wedh* lineage members are not socially inferior, but the *dyil* lineages have greater prestige and are expected to be the leaders in important matters in the settlement. For this reason the *dyil* of a settlement is the 'dominant lineage'.

[629] The chief of the settlement, the *jago*, is taken from the *dyil* lineage. In practice, it occasionally happens that the dominant position of the *dyil* lineage is taken over by a stronger, wealthier, and more numerous lineage but, even if dispossessed of political power and the chieftainship, the original *dyil* lineage retains its ritual connection with the soil and also much of its local prestige. This ritual relationship remains so long as any living representatives of the original *dyil* lineage remain.

Some Observations of a Fieldtrip among the Shilluk

Mohamed Riad

131 The Shilluk occupy a country that extends from 10°45' N. to 9°15' N latitude. Particularly the west bank of the WHITE NILE from about 50 kilometers north of Kaka to approximately 50 kilometers east of Lake No. There is also a Shilluk pocket within Northern Dinkaland. Thus they occupy the right bank of the White Nile from near Kodok to the confluence of the Sobat. They also extend some 60 kilometers up the Sobat river, mainly on its northern bank.

361 The Shilluk settlements, if they can be called villages, are situated from about half a kilometer to a kilometer off the river bank giving the impression of beads hung on a string(1). Also, on the banks of the khors i.e. seasonal streams which discharge into the Nile, rising from the west or east and sloping toward the Nile, Shilluk settlements are to be found. The breadth of the Shilluk land does not exceed a five hour march from the banks of the river(2) and there is a no-man's land which stretches back to the west till the Nuba-hills. This is used as a dry season (winter) grazing land by both Shilluk and nomad Bagara Arabs, but the Shilluk do not, as a rule, pasture their cattle so far to the west. This area is quite well-known only in those areas where roads go up from the river banks to the Nuba mountains. 133 The hydrology of this area is not known although some khors intersect it with courses estimated as parallel to the Nile and joining other khors to discharge seasonal waters into the Nile north of Kaka.

171 226 The Nile is the main waterway in the Shilluk land and because the Shilluk have a comparatively long water front they are the most skilled fishermen of the Nilotic group. The most important khor is one called Collo which takes its waters from the Nile, or more precisely from the bank-swamps against Malakal and runs parallel to the Nile separated from it only by a stretch of comparatively high bank, one to three kilometers broad, and then discharges again in the Nile south of Kodok. Again there is another khor called khor Arepejar which rises from the west and discharges into the Lollo. (3) This khor is of almost no hydrological importance, but of a great significance in the realm of Shilluk cosmology and spiritual thinking. This khor is the boundary between the two religious provinces into which Shillukland is divided. 79 63 On its banks one of the important rites of king installation takes place.

132 133 137 The Shilluk country is more or less a flat land covered with Savannah grass and with occasional clusters of trees, mainly along river and khor banks. The most famous tree is the Doleb(Borrassus aethiopum) which grows in beautiful groves on the Nile banks. The rainy season begins in May but occasional showers heralding the rains occur at the end of March and early April. The dry season begins near the end of October. Rainfall is heaviest in the south. Here is the mean annual rainfall at our stations:-

Fangak	(9°5'N)	1187 mm
Malakal	(9°32')	737 mm
Kodok	(9°55')	682 mm
Renk	(11°45')	506 mm

8:Howell E-4,5 (1937, 1948) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

in the courts are of a kind which in the past were mere matters of convention and usage and could not be defined as law even in the most extended definition of that term. The tendency is for the most intimate personal relationships to be governed by legal processes. This is a feature of the Nilotic world under the influence of modern administration which, while present among the Shilluk, is even more marked among Nuer and Dinka. There is a danger in this, because intervention in almost every sphere of human activity may tend to inhibit the normal readjustments which might otherwise naturally emerge to meet changing conditions. It is therefore all the more necessary to record something of present practice for comparison in later years.

The vast majority of cases which appear before the courts concern kinship obligations, marital relationships and the violation of rights in women. This article is therefore largely a description of the normal processes of marriage: the payment and distribution of bridewealth, divorce, and the infringement of legal rights in women. It is also in the nature of a commentary on previous articles published by Mr. M. E. C. Pumphrey and myself[1] on the subject of kinship and social organization among the Shilluk. From time to time reference is made to Nuer and Dinka institutions by way of comparison.[2] A few examples of actual disputes as heard and recorded in the Shilluk Courts are given in the text.

Shilluk Social Structure

Shilluk society is divided into 'provinces', 'divisions' (*lak*), and 'settlements' (*podh*). These are territorial and political segments, but it is really only the settlement which has any permanent political significance. Each settlement has a common territory, the boundaries of which run at approximately right angles to the river. Such territory includes a section of the highland ridge which runs roughly parallel to the Nile and on which the permanent dwelling-houses and cattle-byres are built; a section of the river front (*toic*) which provides green grazing for the cattle when the river drops, and finally a more extensive section of the hinterland (*wak*) which is subjected to varying degrees of rain-flooding during the wet season but is dry and waterless for the rest of the year. Each type of land is essential for pastoral and agricultural activities according to the season, and the territorial segmentation of Shilluk country could not be arranged otherwise.

A settlement is an economic, political, and social unit, but is not a kinship unit since it contains representative lineages of several of the many Shilluk clans. Within the settlement there is, however, a tendency—not always effective for purely topographical reasons—for each lineage to occupy its own 'village'. Each village (*pac*) is made up of a number of 'hamlets' (also *pac*: pl. *myer*) which comprise several domestic units (*gol*), each such unit consisting of a group of dwelling-huts (*ot*) occupied by a man, his wives, and children. The village is therefore also a kinship unit and, as a general rule, the closer the territorial proximity, the closer the kinship relationship. Clans (described by giving the name of the founder with the suffix *kwa*, meaning 'descendants of') are patrilineal descent groups which are theoretically exogamous, though separation in space, coupled with considerable distance of relationship within the kinship structure, may allow modifications of this rule. The

[1] *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. xxiv, 1941.

[2] The reader may consult the works of Professor Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer. The Dinka are less well documented.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

which largely concern social structure and kinship systems, are to be published later. In this article I have attempted to set down the evidence, often conflicting, concerning the secular and legal functions of the *reth* or king and, since these are relevant, the Shilluk laws of homicide. Professor Evans-Pritchard points out 'if we are to understand the place of the kingship in Shilluk society we must, I think, beware of attempts to define it in terms of judicial and administrative functions and view it rather as a ritual office and in a wider political context'.[1] There are in fact two opposing views. On the one hand are those who consider that the *reth* was the head of a highly-organized administration with a hierarchy of appointed chiefs; that he had absolute powers of adjudication and execution; that he exacted tribute from his people; that he imposed fines upon them for offences against the State. On the other hand are those who hold the opinion that the *reth* had no extensive secular functions of a political or administrative nature, but only a supreme ritual function to perform as the central symbol of the moral and natural order. That the political homogeneity of the Shilluk and the national characteristics of their political structure are maintained by the institution of the *reth* is not to be denied. An analysis of Shilluk political structure, of the segments themselves and of their latent opposition, reveals many forms which closely resemble similar segments in Nuer and Dinka society. The existence of the *reth* gives meaning and co-ordination to the segments of Shilluk society which would otherwise lack political cohesion. But how far are we justified in assuming that the *reth* was an autocratic ruler who intervened in everyday affairs and imposed his authority on his people?

Characteristics of Shilluk Society

The Shilluk are a Nilotic tribe who occupy a narrow strip of country mainly along the west bank of the Nile from Tonga to approximately Lat. 11° N. They are clearly of the same basic stock as the Nuer and Dinka, but have closer affinities with the peoples classified as Shilluk-speaking, i.e. the Anuak, who live along the Baro and Pibor rivers on the frontier of the Sudan and Ethiopia, the Acholi, Lango, Alur, Jopadola, Jaluo,[2] who live as far south as the north-eastern shores of Lake Victoria, and small groups living in the area of the upper waters of the Bahr el Ghazal. Their mythology suggests a common origin and their language is closely allied.

According to tradition the Shilluk migrated from the south through the Bahr el Ghazal into their present country under the leadership of Nyikang, their culture hero and the founder of the present dynasty of Shilluk kings. They conquered and subsequently mixed with the original inhabitants (about whom we know little except that they were probably not a Nilotic people) and extended their territory by raids and infiltration considerably farther north than their present boundaries. Tradition, supported by tribes other than the Shilluk and by Arab tribes living farther north, indicates that Shilluk country once extended as far north as Khartoum.

The Shilluk are now a sedentary people and have nothing approaching the large-scale dry-season migration of the Dinka and Nuer in search of green pasture. Their permanent villages, built on the high ground close to the Nile, are occupied all the

[1] Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 13.

[2] See, for example, Driberg, *The Lango*; Northcote, 'The Nilotic Kavirondo', *J.R.A.I.*, 1907; Evans-Pritchard, 'Luo Tribes and clans', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, no. vii.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

year round and only the youths go to the cattle camps in the riverain pastures, which are never more than a few miles from their villages. The Shilluk are not a pastoral people in the sense that the Nuer and Dinka are, and rely to a much greater extent on agricultural products and on fish, for they are skilled and experienced fishermen. Since their migration to their present territory, it is probable that they have never had a very large cattle population, for their riverain pasture is not extensive.[1]

Shilluk clans[2] are not territorial in basis for they are highly segmented and widely distributed throughout the settlements of Shilluk country; as corporate units they have no real significance except at times of national festivals, and then only in the sphere of ritual and ceremony.

The Shilluk are divided into four main classes or groups of clans:

(i) The *kwareth*: the royal house, who trace descent from Nyikang and from whom the *reth* of the Shilluk is chosen.

(ii) The *orwo*: a disinherited branch of the royal house who do not differ from commoners except in the special functions they perform at the installation of the *reth*, during his lifetime, and at his death. They are a distinct exogamous clan, though they may intermarry with the *kwareth* despite common ancestry.

(iii) The *collo*: the name refers collectively to the main body of the Shilluk clans of which a large number trace descent patrilineally from (*a*) the original followers of Nyikang, (*b*) individuals of other tribes who have migrated and settled in Shilluk country from early times onwards, and (*c*) ancestors who are lost in antiquity, but who may have occupied Shilluk country before the arrival of Nyikang.

(iv) The *kang reth*: the personal attendants of the *reth*, his wives or wives of past *reths*; the descendants of royal slaves obtained by capture; those who volunteer to serve him by reason of their possession by the spirit of Nyikang,[3] and paupers who volunteer for this form of service in order to exist at all. Finally, there are the alleged descendants of those who were enslaved because their close kinsmen committed homicide, though this statement must be examined more critically later.

There are no real caste distinctions between *kwareth*, *orwo*, *collo*, and *kang reth* and, apart from restrictions on the marriages of daughters of a living or past *reth*, they intermarry freely. The *kwareth*, however, by reason of their connexion with Nyikang and subsequent *reths*, are treated with special respect and this extends to those *kang reth* who have close association with the shrines of Nyikang or of dead kings. The Shilluk basic social structure is very similar to that of the Nuer and Dinka, though there are important differences. The segmentation of the population into territorial units and of the clans into localized lineages has, however, a greater permanency and stability. The distinctive feature of the Shilluk political structure is the existence of an established and theoretically omnipotent monarchy and it is in the political sphere

[1] An accurate census taken during the veterinary campaign against trypanosomiasis gives a figure of 25,000. This was after a very severe epidemic in 1926 and it may be assumed that they had lost at least 30 per cent. of their stock. A human census, accurate at any rate within 15 per cent., gives a population figure of 110,000. The ratio of human population to cattle population is therefore between 1:0·3 and 1:0·23. *Cf.* Nuer where highest ratio given is 1:0·3 and the lowest 1:1·2.

[2] *Kwa*: Literally 'descendants of', prefixing the name of the clan. '*Kwa Okelo*'—the descendants of Okelo—and so on.

[3] Often now attendants at the many shrines of Nyikang.

16: Cann G-5 (ca. 1928)1929 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

233 512 857 the depredations of hyænas, and the boys of from ten to fifteen years to clear up the standings of the cattle, collect the head ropes, and clean out the *luaks*.

By the time the boys have finished their duties the cattle are brought back to the village for milking, and the small boys leave with their herds of sheep and goats for pasture and are not seen again until nearly sunset.

[554] Milking is accompanied by much grooming and cleaning of the cattle, and is one of the proudest hours of the Shilluk's life when he handles his beasts in view of the world.

233 512 883 At about 10.30 a.m. the cattle are driven to their damp pasture accompanied by an escort of fighting youths who are responsible for protection against wild beasts, reptiles and predatory human beings.

[224] Cattle and sheep herding by day is the work of youths and boys, and is full-time employment from dawn to dusk—varied by a certain amount of fish-spearing as a recreation—so we will leave them to their duties and turn to the older men to see to what extent the stigma of laziness applies to them.

241 462 512 At the time of writing the first rains have fallen, so every able-bodied man who is not engaged in cattle herding leaves for his cultivation area—which is generally at least three miles inland from the village—before dawn; this early start becomes of vital importance when the [341] dura is first sown, as the guinea-fowl descend from the trees at dawn to consume the seed sown on the previous day, and the cultivator is thus unable to leave his plot until after dusk, when these fowl have gone to roost.

462 512 Women bring food and water to the cultivator twice a day besides carrying out their ordinary household duties which we will now survey.

[341] Shilluk villages for freedom from mosquitoes and other reasons are usually situated from one to three miles away from the Nile, and before [312] dawn one or two women or girls from each house have to go to the river [415] to fill all their available earthen pots and gourds with water for the use [482] of the house before the men go away to work; the ordinary earthen vessel or *puk* when full weighs between thirty and forty pounds, and two or even three trips have to be made to the river daily to supply the needs of the home, so water carrying can only be done by the stronger women and girls.

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CHAPTER II.
SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

INTRODUCTION.

361 [101] [221] [883] Unlike their neighbours the Dinka and the Nuer the Shilluk have become entirely sedentary. They have a long river frontage in proportion to the population and there is therefore no necessity for an annual migration for summer grazing. In the summer the cattle are taken across to islands and the youths accompanying them build temporary cattle camps, but in no case is a village periodically entirely deserted.

[101] 614 631 Thus the Shilluk lack what for example the Dunjol Dinka living opposite them receive, namely an annual refresher course in clan organisation. The Dunjol Dinka village organisation disintegrates in the summer and the clans to a large extent reform for summer grazing. No such periodical reformation takes place with the Shilluk and consequently the clan organisation is more masked by the growth of territorial administrative units. Had the territorial unit, superimposed by years of the sedentary habit, obliterated completely the clan-organisation the administration of the tribe would be relatively simple. But Shilluk conservatism causes them to remain profoundly clan-conscious, and if to-day after some four hundred years of the sedentary state the tribe were for some reason to revert to nomadic habits there is no doubt that the clans would instantly reform.

621 182 721 The territorial system has evolved as the result of the grouping together of neighbouring hamlets, largely for purposes of defence against other groups, into what will be termed "settlements."

THE CLAN (KWAR).

614 *Kwar* (meaning literally "descendants"), followed by the name of the ancestor in question, is the Shilluk equivalent of clan. *Kwar* Okel designates all patrilineal descendants of Okel. Often the ancestor is mythical. There may be some hundred recognised clans in the tribe. But though every one knows to which clan he belongs, and although the clan entire continues to be an exogamous unit, it has ceased to possess for practical purposes any corporate unity. It

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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possesses no chief as such. The clans have in fact disintegrated over the face of the country, so that not only will clan "A" be distributed over several settlements, but one settlement will contain detachments of several clans. A detachment of clan within a settlement has been termed a "lineage" by Mr. Howell and will be so termed in this note.

THE SETTLEMENT (PODH).

The word *podh* is as elastic as the English "home" or the Arabic "dar." It can describe the entire Shilluk country, a settlement or a group of settlements. Properly however it designates the settlement, which is a group of villages, containing several lineages, agglomerated for purposes of mutual defence and owing allegiance to a common chief. The settlement is the basic element in the indigenous tribal structure.

The country is divided into some hundred settlements, varying in size from Kodok which contains more than 600 adult males to others containing less than 100. Geographically they are divided by lines approximately at right angles to the river.

Each settlement contains, in microcosm, the administrative difficulties of the tribe. For the settlement, which appears at first to be a purely territorial unit, is really a collection of different lineages. These lineages, welded together by threat of war, are apt to be dissident in the present time of comparative peace and although they owe allegiance to their common chief they sometimes feel and pay more to the lineage head within the settlement. There is, in fact, in the settlement, as in the whole tribe, a conflict between the loyalties due to the territorial unit and those due to the submerged but ever existing clan.

It is said that Nyikang originally granted each settlement to a clan. The descendants of the original grantees, if they survive, are considered the owners of the soil and are termed *dyil*, to distinguish them from subsequently immigrating lineages, described as *wedh*. Naturally the lineage of the original grantees is often extinct, in which case the next senior lineage in the settlement becomes *dyil*. In theory the *dyil*

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554 lineage should provide the chief. Expediency, however, requires
613 that the chieftainship shall follow local strength, or in other words
621 local numerical superiority. Thus, with a certain inevitable lag,
622 the lineage which is most numerous within the settlement tends to dispossess the *dyil* lineage of the chieftainship[10] of the settlement. Nevertheless the *dyil* lineage, even when dispossessed of the chieftainship, retains a certain local prestige as owners of the soil and its opinion always carries extra weight in debate. Some settlements have an interesting arrangement whereby the chieftainship goes to two or three lineages in turn (*e.g.*, Odong Fanyikang).

361 Within the settlement each lineage has its original hamlet (*pan*
613 *dwong*)[11] subservient to which are the subsequently formed hamlets
621 of that lineage within the settlement. The chief of the *pan dwong* (*i.e.*, the lineage head within the settlement) represents his lineage in the politics and administration of the settlement. The hamlets of one lineage are not necessarily grouped together in the settlement.

613 With a strong settlement chief the lineage loyalties are largely
621 submerged in the *esprit de corps* of the settlement. Conversely when
622 the chief is personally weak or belongs to a lineage which is numerically small the latent lineage loyalty raises its head and the administration of the settlement suffers accordingly.

The Hamlet and the Homestead.

[613 Unlike the settlement each hamlet (*pac*) is a homogeneous unit
621 in the sense that a hamlet contains only people of the same lineage. Some hamlets are very small, consisting of a single homestead, while others may contain fifty. In any case the hamlet is no more than an enlarged family group. The homesteads are arranged in roughly

10. The *lau* (meaning sheepskin) is the insignia of chieftaincy. The name has been transferred to the strip of cloth which each chief receives, usually from the *Reth*, on his appointment.

11. *Pac* = hamlet. This word assumes the forms:
pan when followed by a qualifying adjective.
pa when followed by a genitive.
Its plural is *myer*.

The homesteads are arranged in roughly horse-shoe shape around an open space in which are tethered the sheep and cattle of the hamlet. Within this space is usually a very large hut (*luak*) used for animals in the rains and throughout the year as a guest-house and general village club. There is also usually a normal sized hut, with no surrounding fence, known as the *geu*, which is used as a dormitory by the unmarried men. In this hut are put the ashes of the cattle dung with which the young men cover themselves at night for warmth and protection from flies. Some villages have a tree in the central circle, but more often there is a complete and inhospitable absence of shade.

The homestead (*gol*) consists of two huts between which is an area enclosed by a fence of dura stalks or rough grass matting. The family group inhabiting the homestead is called also (presumably by transference) *gol*, and it is in this latter sense that the word *gol* will be used in this note.

In this sense *gol* is the smallest (though important) social unit in the tribe. An unmarried man does not own a homestead. All unmarried persons live in the homestead and adhere to the *gol* of their father. If their father is dead they adhere to the *gol* of their eldest married brother or, if they have none, to their deceased father's (married) brother. The owner of the homestead to which they adhere is the leader of their *gol*, and as such is responsible for the behaviour of its members. This vicarious responsibility on the part of the *gol* leader is a corollary to the principles of the ownership of cattle (and sheep). The cattle of the *gol* are owned and disposed of by the *gol* leader alone, and since the remedy for a wrong is a payment of cattle it follows that he and not the actual malefactor is held responsible. The position resembles that of the Roman family where the pater-familias alone is *sui juris*, all others being *alieni juris*. The Shilluk *filius familias*, however, becomes *sui-juris* on marriage which the Roman son did not. The vicarious responsibility of the *gol* leader has the convenient aspect that the *gol* leader is more easily found by the arm of the law than the actual malefactor because of the fact that he owns a homestead.

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With the exception of *Reth*, these titles must always be prefixed to the name of the person addressed. Alternatively the title alone may be used.

The *Kwar Reth* is vastly bigger than any other clan. The reasons for its abnormal growth are two, namely their comparatively great wealth with the consequent tendency to marry more wives, and the cunning process of dissemination whereby the *Kwar Reth* have been gradually planted out and have taken root in every part of the Shilluk kingdom. It is this latter process which will now be described.

The *Reth* has many wives,[13] most of whom live with him at Fashoda. When one is about to give birth she goes to her own village where the *Nyireth*[14] is born. As soon as he is weaned he is "planted out"[15] into the charge of some reputable *Collo* chief[16] who becomes responsible for his upbringing. In the hamlet of his adoption the *Nyireth* grows up and while small herds the sheep and cattle and plays with the village boys as an equal. When he reaches the age of marriage he builds a separate village nearby which will be known as *Pa Nyireth* and will be the village of the *Nyireth's* descendants. As the descendants of the *Nyireth* increase this original *Pa Nyireth* will put forth offshoot villages in the immediate neighbourhood, and thus we see the process whereby the *Kwar Reth* is planted out takes root and grows in an area owned by a *Collo* lineage. It is by this continually repeated process that the *Kwar Reth* have been and continue to be disseminated throughout the country. Each branch of the *Kwar Reth*, once planted, grows alongside the local *Collo* lineage and tends to eclipse it. Rivalry results, and often the *Kwar Reth* attain to such numerical superiority that they oust the *Collo* lineage from the chieftainship, whereupon the latter either move elsewhere

13. The wife of a *Reth* is known as *bareth*.

14. It is here assumed that the child is male, though *nyireth* covers either sex. If female she will be similarly planted out but of course she will found no lineage.

15. *pidh* (used also for planting out cuttings in a flower bed).

16. The chief entrusted will often be the *bareth's* brother. In any case he cannot refuse this trust which will bring him certain temporary benefits such as milk cows for the *Nyireth's* nurture but which will probably result eventually in his descendants being made subservient to the lineage of the *Nyireth*.

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613 The Shilluk, although he is conscious of his relationship to his widely scattered kinsmen, normally thinks in terms of his localised lineage. Thus in using the word *Kwar* he often refers to some comparatively recent ancestor, probably to the Shilluk who originally migrated to his settlement and founded his particular lineage. The emphasis here is upon the circumstances in which he is questioned. 613 Away from his settlement and speaking in tribal terms he will refer 614 to the ancestor common to all his kinsmen, in more detailed family discussions to the founder of his lineage.

Every Shilluk is thus a member of a large and scattered kinship group. He is also a member of a local lineage and is bound to it by vigorous feelings of unity fostered by proximity and common interests. 621 In contrast he is also the inhabitant of a settlement (*Podh*) and common residence within it implies something more than a neighbourly spirit. Its occupants are not a mere collection of independent lineages, for they are united by social, economic and political obligations, by the need for mutual protection and have recognised rules of behaviour to one another.

361 The Shilluk are now a sedentary tribe, though they were originally 484 nomads, and it has been said that their apparent political and social [102] cohesion in contrast to many related peoples, has been partly due to the greater facility of communication. In fact their history has [578] been one of frequent internal strife and dynastic quarrels, but it is true to say that in the rainy season, when normal communications are made difficult by the rising of the river level, they have always had an unrestricted medium of travel on the Nile itself and settlements are conveniently situated near to its banks. Shilluk villages are built in an almost continuous line along the west bank with a few scattered settlements on the east bank and on the lower reaches of the Sobat. This formation, however, means that they are dispersed over a very long area, and from Fashoda in the centre, it is a considerable journey to Tonga or Muomo. Taking Shilluk country as a long narrow strip, without including the inland pastures or hunting grounds, the density of population is undoubtedly far greater than among most Nilotic tribes in the Sudan, but the length of country between the centre and

the more distant settlements, owing to the length of the populated area, is not very much shorter. Most parts of Shilluk country are accessible to the inhabitants even when the water-courses and swamps are full, but travelling is not easy and social contact consequently less frequent in the rainy season. The result of such periodic inconvenience of communication and the length of inhabited country are twofold. In the first place, in the past at anyrate, the immediate power of the central authority the *Reth*, was slightly diminished and he was more dependent on the loyalty and competence of the settlement chiefs. Second, difficulty of communication increases the isolation of the settlement and intensifies the feeling of unity within it. Moreover, the clan, having no territorial basis, is put to a further disadvantage. The settlement thus gains importance socially, economically and politically in the structure of the tribe.

The formation of the settlement is based on a particular association of lineages and its structure can only be understood after a searching examination of their position. The fission of clan segments, individual enterprise and migration has been frequent for a very long period of Shilluk history. In each settlement there are therefore both indigenous elements and newcomers. Mr. Pumphrey has explained in outline the position and significance of the *Dyil*.[1] They are fundamentally associated with the land they occupy, and theoretically they enjoy great prestige and authority. Among most primitive peoples the fixation of sentiment on land is bound up with human interests and those who are more closely bound to it acquire special functions and prerogatives not accorded to newcomers. Besides their ritual association with the land, the *Dyil* have obligations and observances of primary importance in the social machinery of their settlement and they form the centre round which internal political activities revolve. Subsequent accretions known in Shilluk as *Wedh* normally hold a position of political subservience to the *Dyil*. It must be emphasised here, that this implies no social inferiority; it merely means that the *Dyil* are expected to take the lead in matters of importance to all inhabitants of the settlement. The *Jago* is usually the chosen representative of the *Dyil* lineage and holds the *Lau Dwong* of office Mr. Pumphrey has pointed out that

[1] [Dyil are the descendants of the people who originally received grants of land from Nyikang. - Analyst]

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chief and by their special relations with the lineage which holds authority over them. Thus there are social, political and economic influences backed by common residence which promote unity and emotional security, and patterns of behaviour arise entirely distinct from those which characterise the kinship group.

The balance of loyalty to settlement or to kin is difficult to define. The lineage resident in one locality is clearly the most significant unit of society. Blood relationship is closer and co-operation is intensified by daily contact and mutual interests. All the factors which make for peace and mutual help in the settlement are not sufficient to break the ties which unite the local lineage. Loyalty, obligations and observances are greater towards a blood relative who is also a neighbour than towards an individual who is a neighbour only. The corporate unity of the lineage is kept alive by kinship which is a biological fact and the observance of exogamy and all the complicated obligations raised in marriage do not allow the Shilluk to forget. The extended clan, however, in which relationship may be so remote as to be fictitious, is not cemented together by lasting and mutual interests, nor are old associations renewed by periodic reunion. Even so, the traditions of the clan are to some extent maintained and the rule of exogamy is not broken however scattered its members

The Shilluk settlement consists of a number of hamlets *Myer*, (*Pl of Pac*,) each occupied by a lineage. The settlement has a varying number of distinct lineages resident therein, but each hamlet is exclusively occupied by a kinship group. Each hamlet is a separate cluster of huts which are built along the high ground parallel to the river bank. The distance between each varies from a hundred yards to a mile or so. The hamlet is not constant in the number of its huts and grows or diminishes in size according to the increase or decrease in numbers of the lineage which occupies it. Mr. Pumphrey has explained that off-shoots from hamlets are continually being initiated by enterprising young Shilluk who, having married, wish to build a home for themselves away from the parent hamlet. Sometimes these off-shoots (*Nyole Myer*) are started in other parts of the country, more usually within the settlement and not far from the birth-place fo their founder.

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

361 621 A new hamlet thus founded may remain a single homestead of no great importance in the life of the lineage and none at all in the structure of the settlement. On the other hand the young man who thus breaks away from the hamlet of his birth and up-bringing may prosper and acquire many wives. In this case the off-shoot will develop with rapidity and after three generations may be as large as the parent village. Other kinsmen may join and swell the number of homesteads.

The Shilluk word for hamlet is *Pac* and has two meanings: truly a *Pac* is a hamlet founded by the original immigrant to the settlement where it is situated. Subsequent offshoots are, however, technically included under the name of the central hamlet from which they spring. *Pa Kwar Ajang* may thus refer to the original hamlet founded by *Ajang*. After a few generations the number of associated hamlets and the number of *Nyole Myer* may be considerable, and *Pa Kwar Ajang* may be used to designate them collectively. Under normal conditions, probably after three generations, but depending entirely on the increase of progeny, and the number of homesteads built by descendants, the offshoot will acquire a separate name and in every day conversation will not be included under the title of the original hamlet. Hamlet names among the Shilluk may or may not have the prefix *Pac* or *Pa*.[1] 103 *Pa Kwar Ding* means the hamlet of *Ding's* descendants. Others have 361 no prefix and the etymological explanation is often hard to find. 621 Some at least have purely descriptive names. Thus *Pan Thin* means the little hamlet and *Panowak* refers to a hamlet situated near the bush. In the settlement of *Yom Dhok Alal*, those hamlets recently [613] built on the north side of the water-course retain the same name as their parent hamlets and indeed are not distinguished from them. Their inhabitants have not gained sufficient numbers or prestige to be regarded as a distinct section of their lineage.

361 621 A more detailed examination and analysis of the structure and development of a Shilluk settlement necessitates the use of an example.

[194] 1. The letters P and F are interchangeable in Shilluk. Thus *Pacodo* = *Facodo* (*Fachodo*).

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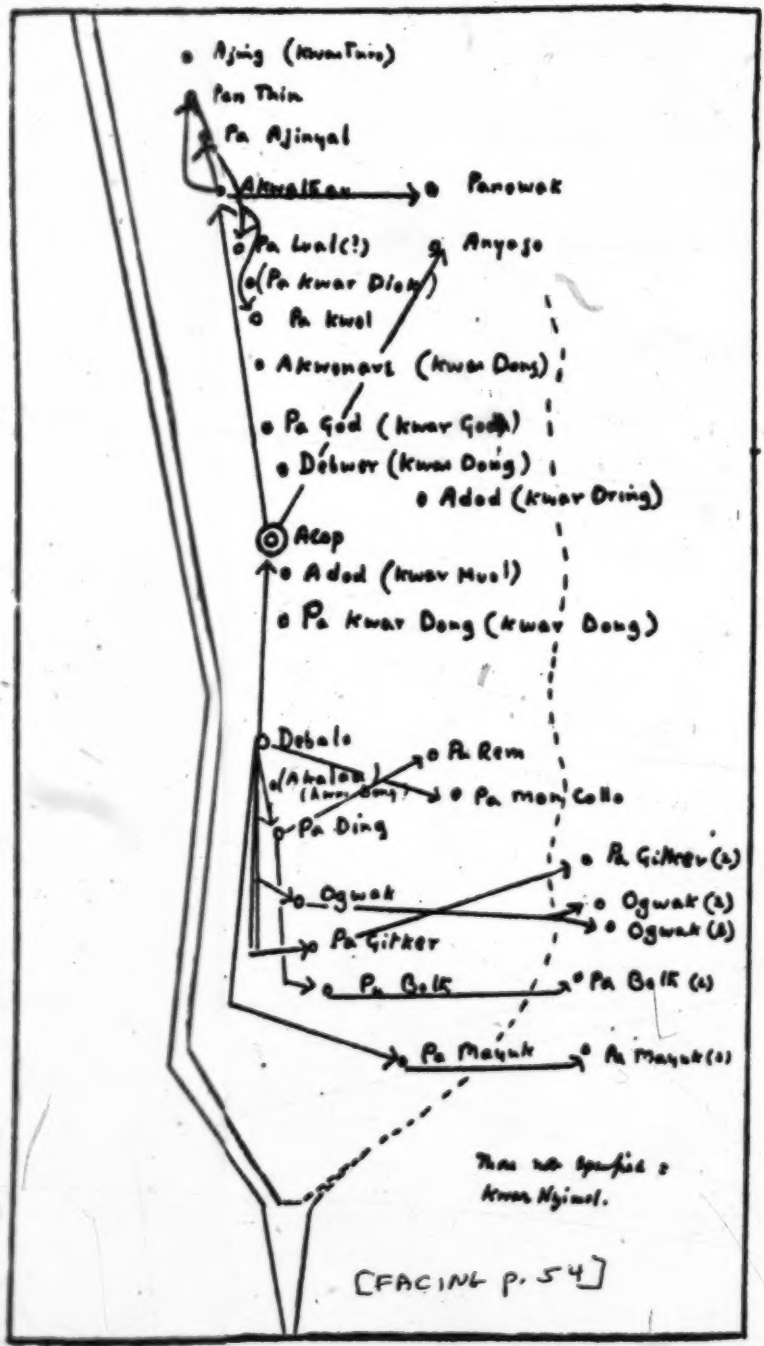
For this purpose *Podh Yom Dhok- Alal* has been chosen and in particular *Kwar Nyimol* which is the dominant clan lineage within it. *Yom* is very vaguely differentiated from *Dhok- Alal*, but the distinction is not a real one and the two are considered as one settlement. It seems that the *Kwar Nyimol* originally settled in the latter area and gradually spread to *Yom*. It is possible that in the past the two territories were entirely unconnected, but that the members of *Kwar Nyimol* increased rapidly, dominated the other lineages living there and extended their sphere of influence in such a way as to incorporate *Yom*. If this is so it provides an excellent illustration of the way in which the structure and boundaries of a settlement may change with the development and movements of the occupants.

In the map of the settlement it will be seen that there are twenty, five hamlets, not including the off shoots who have no separate names- of which sixteen are occupied by members of *Kwar Nyimol*, four by *Kwar Dong*, one by *Kwar Muol*, one by *Kwar Oring* (almost extinct), one by *Kwar Turo*, and one by *Kwar Godh*. It is clear that *Kwar Nyimol* are the most important and hold their position by numerical superiority if by nothing else. *Kwar Dong* are the next largest in numbers of hamlets, while the others have but one hamlet each. It might be supposed that since *Kwar Nyimol* is numerically by far the largest lineage, it is also the oldest in the settlement. There is, however, conclusive evidence that most of the other lineages occupied the area long before the arrival of *Pyem* who founded *Debalo*, the original hamlet of *Kwar Nyimol*. Most of the other lineages have priority of claim to the title *Dyil*. Disease, war, fission and migration have caused a decrease in their numbers over a long period.

Kwar Nyimol are *Ororo*,[2] but since there does not seem to be any exception in their case, the example illustrates both the pattern of segmentation with a settlement of the various lineages of a clan and the growth of a *Wedh* lineage which has outnumbered the *Dyil* and assumed the *Lau Dwong*. The exactitude of the genealogical list shown on page 67 cannot be vouched for. It is as the *Kwar Nyimol*

2. The special status of the Ororo is explained by Mr. Pumphrey (page 12).

[see MPumphrey, His File. -Analyst]



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recite it, but in any case it is given as an illustration of the process of fission and the development of offshoots typical to any Shilluk clan lineage and might well be done in figures only. *Debalo*, founded by *Pyem* who was reduced to the status of *Ororo* from the *Kwar Reth*, was the first hamlet to be founded. *Pyem* had three grandsons, one of whom, *Odhek*, migrated to a spot a few hundred yards away, in the direction of *Tonga*, and there founded *Acop*. *Acop* is now the central and most important hamlet in the settlement and is the home of *Jago Ameilah*[3] who holds the *Lau Dwong* of the settlement and indeed the whole of *Tonga*.

There is no apparent reason why *Debalo* should cease to be the most important village, but the leadership of the *Kwar Nyimol* has for some time been in that branch of the lineage who occupy *Acop*. The *Lau Dwong* is not necessarily inherited by an eldest son, or by a son resident in his father's hamlet. There are no rules of primogeniture and the choice was made with the approval of all members of the lineage. Even other lineages have some say in the matter and the appointment must be confirmed by the *Reth*. Accession to the title of *Jago* is thus controlled by the personality, prestige and competence of the claimant. *Acop* has been the seat of the *Jago* at least for the last three generations. *Debalo* and *Acop* are the parent hamlets of two separate lines of segmentation. From *Debalo* sprang all the hamlets situated to the east, while from *Acop*, which was itself founded from *Debalo*, sprang the hamlets in *Yom* stretching towards *Tonga*. The process of fission which can be traced on the genealogical chart is substantiated by many members of *Kwar Nyimol*.

The smaller hamlets which lie beyond the water-course behind *Dhok Alal*, provide more recent examples of this breaking away of individuals and the foundation of new hamlets. They have not yet grown large enough to acquire a separate entity and they are still considered part of their parent hamlets. *Pa Gitker* remains one homestead only, while its extension though more recent is larger. *Pa Gitker* sprang from *Debalo*. In the case of *Pa Mayuk*, *Okwano* the son fo

3. *Jago Ameilah* is now dead.

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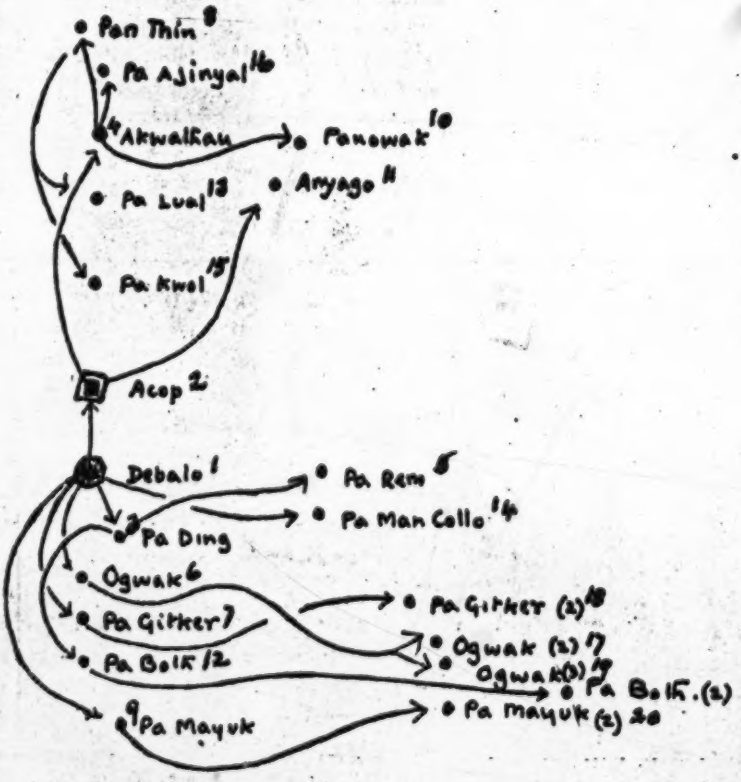

[FACING p. 55]

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Amayku's nephews founded a hamlet across the water-course but is now dead and left no sons. In this example the offshoot has come to nothing. *Pa Ding* also, from which sprang *Pa Rem* and *Pa Both* and which is of long standing, is now disintegrating. Its occupants have not been prolific and there have been too many offshoots for it to remain undiminished. It is now occupied by one man only. *Ogwak* on the other hand is flourishing and has two well-established offshoots. Thus hamlets are founded and in some cases prosper and the inhabitants increase in number. The founder is often joined by a brother or colateral relative and later the occupants may not be the direct descendants of the founder[4]. In other instances those long-established disintegrate and are sometimes abandoned altogether. The settlement is never a static formation but a dynamic and changing association of lineages, who split up among themselves within the boundaries or send out offshoots to settle in other parts of the country. Latterly, however, there has been a tendency towards stabilization. In the past, the settlement was only a loose alliance of local branches of the clan, similar in construction and significance to the larger divisions of the tribe. However, the limited size of the area and constant contact have produced an integral unit of the social body bound by something more than a vague tradition of military co-operation. The inhabitants of a settlement live in close proximity, gave legal and economic interests in common and look to their chief to represent their collective grievances in the affairs of the tribe. A mutual protection pact is, however, the basis on which they are grouped together and in this connection it is necessary to give some account of the age-sets into which they are organized.

4. In *Dhok Alal* it is interesting to note that in at least three cases hamlets have been founded by the husbands of female members of the lineage. Thus *Pa Man Collo* was started by the husband of the daughter of *Adultung*. The daughter of *Kukwei* married into some other clan and left the territory, but her son returned to found *Pa Lual*. The daughter of *Gither* married a man from *Ayigo* and together they settled in *Dhok Alal* and their hamlet is considered an extension of *Pa Gither*. In a few cases the Shilluk settle matrilocally as in the case of *Adultung's* grandson. Often the descendants of a man who has settled in his wife's home seem to trace descent matrilineally, and will often mention the name of their mother's father, if asked their lineage, rather than a forbear in the paternal line. This is a legal fiction of convenient usage and is not technically recognised. The test of exogamy does not apply for a man would not seek to marry into his mother's lineage, but it is a claim which provides protection and added prestige to the individual who lives in close proximity to his mother's kinsmen.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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that Shilluk country once extended as far as Gordon's Tree which is just south of Khartoum. Whether there were Shilluk settlements permanently occupied in that area or whether this represents the furthest point to which they penetrated in raids and hunting parties is not certain.

The Shilluk are now a sedentary people and do not have any large scale migration in search of fresh pastures during the dry season. Their permanent villages, built on the high ground close to the Nile, are occupied all the year round, and only the youths go into the cattle camps, which are never more than a few miles from the villages. The cattle camps are mostly situated on islands and dried out watercourses which run parallel to the river.

Territorially the country is divided into two great provinces Gerr and Luak. (Note 1) These two provinces are again divided into further divisions, the functional meaning of which is difficult to discover, but which retain according to Shilluk tradition a vague feeling of mutual co-operation in times of stress. These divisions were made by order of Nyikang. In most cases these divisions have been utilized by the Government for administrative purposes. Finally the country is divided into a large number of settlements, which are made up of many villages. Shilluk clans are not territorial in basis for distinct lineages of one clan may live in many and widely separated settlements. The largest unit exclusively occupied by a kinship group is the village or *bac*.[2]

The Shilluk people are divided into four main classes or groups of clans.

(i) The Kwareth, the royal clan who trace descent from Nyikang and from whom the *reth*[3] is chosen.

(ii) The Ororo, a disinherited branch of the royal house, who do not differ from commoners except in the special functions

2. See P. P. Howell, "The Shilluk Settlement": *S.N.R.* XXIV, 1941.

3. The word *reth* has often been translated as "king." We prefer to use the Shilluk term throughout.

For Notes see pp. 75 ff.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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of the Detwok division came together, and so did all sections of Fashoda division, but the component sections of the Golbainy division split and formed separate contingents. It is probable that there is no deep tradition behind this, but that grouping is largely governed by what is considered a suitable size for a contingent. Lemmo is a small section and could not produce a contingent of its own, so it joined up with Kodok its larger neighbour. It is not clear whether the sections of Shilluk society have any definite traditional function to perform at the funeral wake of a *reth*. The *reth* had orginally planned that the four days of dancing should be apportioned as follows :—

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1. Fashoda 2. Golbainy 3. Detwok 4. Fashoda (again).

This arrangement was carried out on the first day, and the dancing confined to Fashoda division, but Nyigir turned up and were regarded as intruders. Next morning, however, everyone else appeared, and the decision was taken to cut the dance to two days only.

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The late *reth*'s mother (Note 3) was a Nuba woman from near Fungor, which is on the western boundaries of Shilluk country. Some of her relatives arrived on the second day of the ceremony. Naturally they played no significant part, but it is interesting that they should have come at all.

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Layout of the village Pareth Fafiti.

Pareth Fafiti, also called Abwogatho, "fear of death", the village which the late *reth* built for himself, (Note 4) is of medium size and of the usual Shilluk type. There are three cattle byres built round an open space, which is about 70 yards in diameter. The houses are built round the outside of this open space and five of these, in which the wives of the late *reth* reside, had been repaired and the fences round them renewed. The tomb of the late *reth* is the house where his senior wife lived, and in form no different from any Shilluk homestead except for the eight cross bands on the fence and a stockade of withies outside, which was built after the late *reth*'s burial. This

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19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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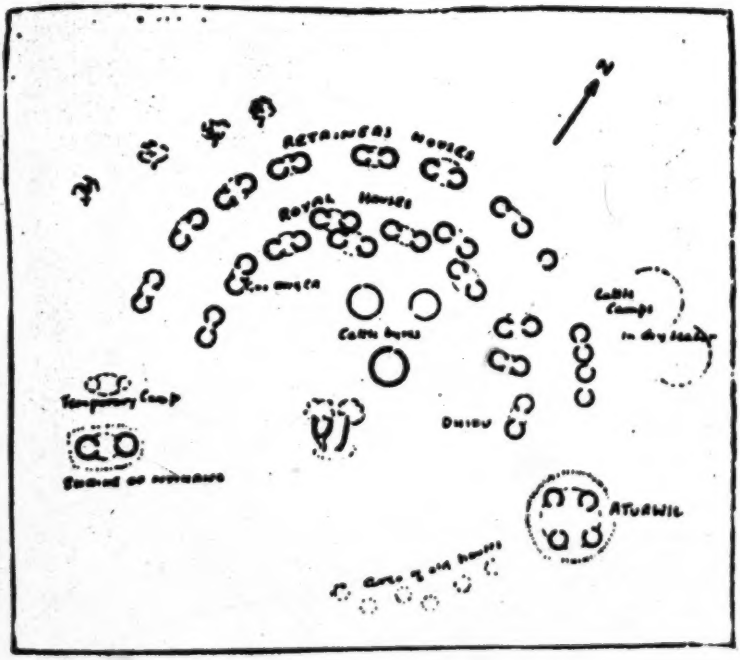

SKETCH PLAN OF FASHODA

[FACING P. 66]

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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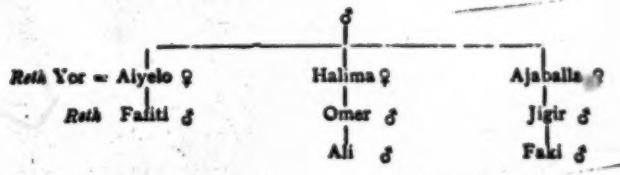
Note to Introduction.

000 2. Sir Samuel Baker. *Ismailia* p. 102.

Notes to Part I

644 3. The relationship of the two most important men among the late *reth*'s maternal relatives is recorded below :—



Ali and Faki, descendants of Fafiti's mother's sisters, were present.

643 The Nuba of the Fungor area have considerable traditional con-
648 nection with the Shilluk. The bamboos for Nyikang's body are brought from here, and gifts are exchanged between the *reth* and the local Nuba chief, whom we met at Fashoda some time after the installation when he was being invested with the insignia of a Shilluk chief.

643 4. *Reth* Fafiti was brought up in a village in Kodok section,
361 but after 1917 the supporters of Coti Ajang were too numerous for
103 comfort in Kodok section, and Fafiti, in fear of assassination, moved his village to Golbainy and called it Abogathow "fear of death."

534 5. The royal Shilluk drums had special houses built for them in
766 Fashoda, and special custodians appointed for them. These drums
643 no longer exist. Shilluk say that *reth* Fafiti, angered because *reth* Fadiet had held no funeral dance for *reth* Kus hurled the royal drums into the Nile, and held the dance for *reth* Fadiet with Fadiet's own drums. For the funeral dance of a *reth* (*wowo*) the drums are stood up on end in shallow holes prepared in the ground, and beaten with newly cut sticks of the *heglig* tree. For other funeral dances, the drums are mounted horizoutally upon forked sticks.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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Chapter II

THE PROMISED LAND

I awoke refreshed from sleep, and in the bright morning sunshine I was able to survey my new dwelling place. It was no Eden. In Africa there are many places of wonderful natural beauty, but Detwok is not one of them. Right in front of the house stood the ignoble remains of a brick kiln, and that together with the dried-up appearance of the soil gave one the impression of standing in a well-burnt brick-field. One looked ahead over an expanse of baked earth scarcely relieved by tufts of grass, yellow and shrivelled by the heat, and low clumps of thorn bushes and saw the river shining in the distance. To right and left of the house, indeed almost surrounding the compound in the rear, was a forest of vicious-looking thorn bush beyond which, half a mile away, could be seen the Shilluk villages thinly strung out in line, like, as one writer has put it, 'beads on a string'. In the compound itself were the Fathers' house, a substantial building just recently completed by the Italian Fathers with bricks burnt in the kiln whose ruins still remained, the Convent of the Sisters and a two-storey building with a school below and chapel above.

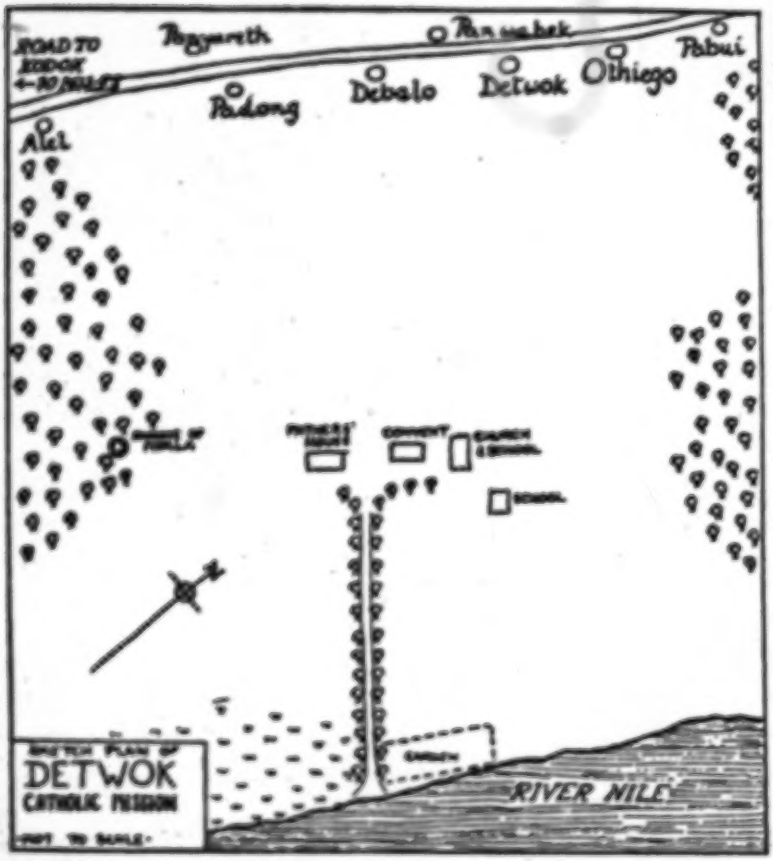
The scene was unlovely in the extreme. The earth of all that portion of the Upper Nile Province apart from the swamps is cotton soil, which, though eminently suitable for the growing of cotton, is useful for little else. In the dry season, lasting from November to June, its surface is rough and hard, broken by large cracks into which a bicycle wheel can easily slip as far as the hub; in the time of the rains it soon becomes a mass of grey viscous mud as unsafe for a careless walker as the surface of an ice rink. After a few weeks of heavy rain most of the countryside turns into a vast swamp through which one must wade knee-deep in water,

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

134 struggling at each step to free oneself from the clinging mud underneath. Long after the rains have ceased the swamp remains, only drying up gradually under the heat of the sun and through drainage into the river, until by mid-December the moisture has all been drawn from the earth, and the bright green grass which has covered it during the rains begins to turn yellow and wither.

797 If my new home was no Eden of beauty, neither was it one free from labour and toil. The territory covered by the mission is, I discovered, quite large. In length it is about 70 miles, extending from Kaka, 55 miles to the north, to a point 15 miles south of Detwok; inland it stretches 15 miles [361] from the river where the Shilluk villages farthest from the river are to be found. The 'parish' thus comprises roughly an area of 1,050 square miles and it is a formidable task for two priests to administer it, especially as the most speedy [493] means of transport available is the push bicycle. However, [771] most of the Christians, who at that time were by no means numerous, lived in the villages near the mission, and large areas were without habitation of any kind, so that the task of parochial visitation did not prove as onerous as it might at first appear. The Shilluk are inveterate wanderers and [166] often drift from the villages in which they were born and baptized as far north as Kaka, or inland to the limits of inhabited country. There they will remain for years quite out of touch with the mission and Christian influence, for rarely if ever do they come in to hear Mass and receive the Sacraments. With all the good will in the world it is impossible for two priests, one with the many affairs of the mission to attend to and the other fully occupied in the school, to keep track of these nomads and follow them in their 763 wanderings. But their heavenly mother, Mary, does not for- 797 get them at the hour of their death, and many is the time that a message from a vigilant catechist, or word brought casually by a passing traveller, or, more often than not, a request for a burial cloth from the pagan relatives of the dying Christian sends the priest post-haste a journey of 15 or 20 miles, in the dry season by bicycle, in the rains on foot, to bring the

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23



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last consolations of religion to these poor brethren of Christ.

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After a month or so of my stay in Detwok I was happily settled in my new home, and was beginning to find my way about both in the district and—what was more difficult—in the Shilluk tongue. Although my activities were mainly confined to the classroom, occasionally I was able to escape from the trammels of schoolwork and spend a morning touring round some part of the mission. A morning of visiting

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29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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173 To the west and north was the desert inhabited by peoples
174 greater and stronger than themselves and prepared to dispute their advance in that direction; on the east the Nile ran, and behind them were the swamplands, and Dimo.
131 They had no choice then but to stay in the country where
361 they are found today, a narrow belt of land extending from Tonga in the south to Kaka in the north, a distance of about 150 miles. Inland Shilluk settlements may be found 15 miles away from the river, but generally their villages, containing from two to twenty or thirty families, stand no further than a mile or two from its banks, straggling along the whole length of the country. Since their first settling there some hardy souls have crossed the Nile and found a foothold on its eastern bank which they have gradually extended until they occupy a strip of land stretching from opposite Kodok in the north to the River Sobat in the south, and along that river for a distance of 30 miles or so. The nature of the country on the other side, however, does not differ from that of their original settlement, and the powerful Dinka tribe has always opposed their progress inland, so that those who have gone to live on the eastern bank are no better off than they were before.

565 The social structure of the Shilluk tribe is built up from a division of the people into four classes or castes. These classes are not however exclusive, for they live together in the same villages, share common tasks and recreations and even intermarry. The basis of the division is the possession of royal blood, or, ultimately, descent from Nyikang.

565 The first class is that of the Kwareth, the Royal Clan. To
644 this belong all those who are members of the royal houses tracing their ancestry directly to Nyikang. Only a member of this class is eligible for election as king. The first four generations of a king's descendants are recognized as being of royal blood and are entitled to the privileges of royalty.
[304] Thus they are permitted to retain all their teeth, they may
[301] wear an anklet of small white beads, and more than one
[292] according to the nearness of descent; they alone may dress in a leopard skin for a dance.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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Chapter IV

SHILLUK LIFE

The Shilluk country is for the most part flat, low-lying grass-land. The river by constant pressure frequently breaks through its containing banks and, sweeping away the soft soil, inundates the land lying behind them. Since nothing is done to repair the broken banks, these inundations increase each year as with the rise of the Nile the waters creep ever further inland, receding only slowly with the fall of the flood waters. As a consequence of this, Shilluk villages are usually built well back from the river, at least half a mile from the highest point of the flood. Usually, too, they are built along the main road passing from Kaka to Tonga. In some areas, particularly in the Detwok-Kodok locality, villages can be found several miles inland, even up to as much as fourteen miles. In such places the people depend for their water supplies on the scum-covered water holes dug here and there. Naturally, under conditions like this personal hygiene is somewhat at a discount, and social or parochial calls present their own problems. During the dry season the Nile is the only source of water for most villages, even those situated miles away from the river. At Detwok, for instance, it is a common sight to see the women of Aguno trudging past the mission at six o'clock in the morning, having already walked five miles. In half an hour or so they will be on their way back balancing their full water-pots on their heads. They cannot reach their homes again before nine o'clock when they will have to set to work to grind millet and prepare the morning meal. If they are careful with the water it may last for two days, but then they will have to pick up the large earthenware pots and take the hated road to the Nile more than five miles off. Once when I happened to be passing through

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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312 Aguno I stopped to watch a couple of men stretching and [281] scraping a cow hide. One of them called to a girl in the village, his wife or sister, to bring him some water to soften the skin. With great reluctance she brought a large bowlful and stood by, while with lavish hand the man splashed the precious water on skin and ground indiscriminately. He then demanded more and I thought, and hoped, that she would refuse; that she would remind him that she had walked eleven burning miles to bring the water that he threw away so thoughtlessly. After a moment's hesitation, however, she picked up the bowl he had thrown at her feet and turned slowly towards the hut, but as she did so I saw two tears overflow from her brimming eyes and roll down her cheeks. Such [562] drudgery is forced on these womenfolk by circumstance and custom, and we can only wish that things were in some way bettered.

361 But now let us proceed and see what a Shilluk village is [487] like. We enter it along a little path which leads from the main road and passes through the dried up, yellow stubble of last season's millet plantation.

Passing through the space between the fences of two [367] neighbouring homesteads, we come upon a large level [535] circle of bare ground which is the playground of the village and its dancing floor. Sometimes it boasts a tree, green and leafy in contrast to its dun, dusty surroundings, under the refreshing shade of which the village elders gather to discuss [521] the affairs of their little world: the price of cattle, the failure of the harvest, the prospect of the fishing. Under the tree, too, [534] or at the further side of the dancing floor, are two large forked stakes driven into the ground to hold the drums. Around this circular central space the family dwellings are grouped.

[621] Villages vary in size, from the small hamlet consisting of two or three homesteads to a large settlement of sixty or seventy. An average-sized village contains about thirty families. All, however, are set up on the same plan, and the houses are built according to the same pattern. Each house-
351 hold consists of two houses set facing one another in a small

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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or Greek merchant and purchase one imported from England.

The most important and busiest months in the Shilluk year are those of the rainy season, from June to November. When the first rains fall, the villagers go out to prepare their fields for planting. The main plantations are generally at a considerable distance from the village, sometimes as much as ten miles inland; the small patches of maize and millet around the villages, usually cultivated by the women, are for a quick crop that can be used as soon as it is ripe. After the first few showers the grass is burnt and the ashes left to be washed into the soil. When enough rain has fallen to soften the ground, planting begins. There is no preliminary back-breaking hoeing or digging; the Shilluk would regard as crazy anyone who would suggest that such a thing was necessary or would improve the land. He would say that if the rains are good and all other circumstances favourable to growth, he will get enough grain to last him for the year, whereas if fortune is adverse, all the digging in the world will not fill his store basket. What was good enough for his fathers away back to the time of Nyikang is good enough for him; why should he try to improve on the wisdom of the ancients? If this particular patch was sufficient for his father and his father's father, why should he go to the trouble of clearing another? One of the Fathers in Lul, an expert and enthusiastic farmer, tried to convert the schoolboys to a better system of farming by showing them the benefits of digging and manuring the land. He divided an area of ground into two equal parts, planting one half according to the Shilluk and the other according to his own improved method; yet even the sight of the bumper crop that he obtained failed to impress the boys: it was not the Shilluk way of doing things and therefore not for them. And so, the husbandman with a sharp pointed stick removes a small divot from the unbroken surface, drops in a few millet seeds and pushes back the soil with his heel as he moves on. When the whole field has been sown in this manner, he is content to sit back and leave the rest to the beneficence of Nyikang,